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'RELEASE POLITICAL PRISONERS' SAYS VIETNAMESE PRIEST

To the group of Japanese Christians who came to meet him at Tokyo International Airport April 20, Fr. Nguen Dinh Thi spoke softly: "I have come here on a pilgrimage--a pilgrimage to express our gratitude to Japanese Christians and others for what they have done for us Vietnamese people." The humble statement, in fact had more appealing power than any other persuasions to the Japanese, who felt how little they have done.

Fr. Thi, who is executive secretary of *Movement des Catholiques au Service de la Nation Paris*, came to Japan at the invitation of a voluntary Christian group to tour key cities of Japan (see JCAN, April 27). About 200 came to Joshi-gakuin on May 5 to listen to him and to see a vivid film he brought regarding political prisoners in S. Vietnam. In the evening some 50 people participated in an exchange between him and Prof. Kinhide Mushakoji of Sophia University.

Until 1963, the short but stoutly built priest confessed, he agreed with most other Catholics who believed communism was the Devil, and he therefore obeyed propaganda to flee to the South. This resulted, in effect, in supporting the Ngo regime and American imperialism which heavily relied upon the Catholic population for their existence. But since the time of bombing, after much hesitation and prayer and thinking, he decided that even a man of religion--especially himself as a Christian--must act to stop the killing. He began to see the war in Vietnam as a war between American capitalism and the Third World, between technology and humanity, between material and spiritual.

The crucial but not well-known fact now concerns the fate of political prisoners in S. Vietnam, he said. About 200,000 Vietnamese are being brutally treated in President Thieu's prisons. They were arrested because they wanted peace just as you who are here today do, Thi stated. They were arrested because they did not follow American pattern of politics. Out of 17 million people in S. Vietnam, 7 million are reported to be victims of this crime--either they themselves or members of their families have been arrested. He appealed for release of these prisoners as the most urgent priority for the establishment of peace in Vietnam.

Asked what he thinks of Japan and what Japanese could do, the priest suggested: (1) Japan's economic development has been perhaps too rapid. Christians ought to find what God wants us to do in this situation. (2) Today the world needs not an individual but a universal salvation. In pursuing this universal salvation we should not expect much from the relationship between nations, he said, but we should create closer solidarity among peoples--a strong solidarity of many peoples which can bring about real peace in the world.

In response, some Japanese Christians are planning to organize a direct appeal to the public regarding the situation of political prisoners in S. Vietnam.

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OKINAWA--WHERE CLOUDS MOVE FAST ACROSS THE PLACID SKY

One year ago the reversion of the administration of Okinawa (the Ryukyu Islands) to Japan took place under terms agreed upon by the two governments, and many people hoped that this would be as significant a step as the officials of the respective governments claimed.

Now, a year later, what changes has reversion brought, or wrought?

According to Akira Makiya, a *Ryukyu Shimbin* reporter and Anglican layman, Okinawans hoped reversion would mean: an improvement in their economic situation, which has lagged far behind that of mainland Japan, the removal of U.S. military bases, and respect for the rights of the Okinawan people.

But instead, following reversion, prices have risen so fast that Okinawans are finding it more, rather than less, difficult to make a living; U.S. bases continue to occupy 12% of the total land area and as much as 35% of the central area of the main island; and incidents and decisions that ignore the elemental rights of the Okinawan people continue to be an almost daily occurrence.

Furthermore, Japan Self Defense Force (SDF) units are being added to the U.S. military presence and Okinawa is being invaded by mainland capital that is concerned much more with profits than with a stable economy for the Okinawan people.

What's the attitude of churches toward Okinawa's problems?

Outside of the Kyodan pastors and young people, says Makiya, the Okinawan churches exist separate from society. They don't discuss issues like prices, the bases, human rights. Makiya himself disagrees with this position. "There are the problems of the people," he says. "If the church is concerned for the people, it must take them up. All these issues are bound together in our daily lives."

Rev. Shigeaki Kinjo, moderator of the Okinawa district of the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan), identifies the problems Okinawans face much as Makiya does. He says the problems are too big for the church to tackle in their entirety. Rather than sporadic activity here and there, there is more tendency now to take them up as they appear locally. Kinjo acknowledges that only since the war and in comparatively recent years have the Kyodan churches become conscious of their responsibility in society.

He describes as an effort "built on reversion uneasiness" the *Sodo-in* (total mobilization evangelism) program now being carried on in Okinawa with the participation of a wide range of churches, although only two Kyodan churches are cooperating on a large scale and two others partially.

Sodo-in has introduced new mass evangelism methods like a Fukuin Festival and, in contrast to programs that bring in outside evangelists, relies heavily on laymen. Some churches involved in it declare that the church should *not* get into social problems. On the other hand, says Kinjo, young people say the church is wrong if it does not get involved in society.

Rev. Hirokazu Yoshizawa, pastor of Miseto Church, close to Kadena Air Base, says "Of course the church must be concerned with the problems that Okinawa faces today. But we've learned that the pastor can't get too far out in front of his people. If he does, real church renewal can't take place."

Makiya is one of a group of nine laymen and pastors who meet across denominational lines to study the current Okinawa situation. And in Tairagawa under the aegis of Rev. Kiyohiko Nakaoshi, a group of young people have been meeting regularly for more than a year in a serious investigation of "the revival of the military-industrial complex in Japan." Among their topics are the environmental damage from oil refineries, the movements of the SDF and the International Ocean Expo scheduled for 1975 to promote tourism but now being questioned as to its real intention and effect.

by Dr. In Ha Lee, General Secretary, KCCJ

At the General Assembly of the NCCJ held March 27-28, one of our Korean Christian Church delegates raised several identity questions which were too complicated for the other delegates to understand because of insufficient background. One of the questions concerned charging the name of the NCC Minority Group Problems Committee to the NCC Committee on Basic Human Rights for Foreigners in Japan. This involves a typical identity question for which the 610,000 Koreans in Japan are seeking answers.

Koreans were brought to Japan in the early part of this century at the time of Korea's annexation. Since then many of the first generation have died, and the second and third generation now comprise 75% of the Korean population here. Sociologists expected that, with this generation change, large numbers of the Koreans would ultimately be assimilated into Japanese society. However, this is not the case; during the past 28 years *only* 50,000 Koreans, many of them children of mixed marriages, applied for citizenship. Even these naturalized persons are unable to find their real place in Japanese society; this was illustrated four years ago in the suicide of a naturalized student of Waseda University after failure to receive acceptance as a Japanese. It is against this background that I share with you three major identity questions for Koreans in Japan today:

1. *Assimilation super-imposed*--Though it is unpopular, some think that Koreans are in the process of assimilation to the Japanese majority. But the majority of Koreans are reluctant to see this happen because of the tragedy illustrated above of their not being accepted as a part of Japanese society.
2. *Exodus*--Many Koreans in Japan still hold a firm conviction that Exodus is the answer--especially those related to the North Korean government. This is the reason for their building nearly 200 educational institutions, from elementary to college level. Through this means they not only seek to give a national and ideological identity to North Korea but also to make more real their own identity as North Koreans. You may have noticed girl students proudly wearing their Korean style uniforms and other women with brightly colored Korean dresses. To a certain degree this does free them from Japanese customs, thinking and behavior. Due to these efforts, nearly 100,000 Koreans have returned to North Korea since 1958. However, there is a steady decrease year by year in spite of the strong emphases, indicating the dilemma of Koreans in Japan. It must also be added that, for some Koreans here who identify themselves as South Koreans there is a nostalgia for the homeland but practical priorities lead them to seek their identity as Koreans in Japan.
3. *Cultural Minority Presence*--The majority, quite frankly, are choosing not to return to Korea. On the other hand they do not want to be assimilated into Japanese society because *lost identity* is not the answer. The younger generation have been educated in a Japanese school system which, rather than giving them any sense of their own being, tends to make them feel humiliated because of their Korean heritage. For this reason many of the younger generation are struggling with the question of their own selfhood and place in society. Our young people are trying to liberate themselves from such dehumanizing educational and social systems. They try to identify themselves as part of the Korean culture but, as a matter of fact, they have already been stripped of most of their language and cultural traditions. So they desperately try to regain that which is lost and deprived them through their life in Japanese society. Through this painful process they get a sense of their need for realizing their humanity through their cultural identity.

The Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ) is very much a part of this situation. The KCCJ, believing that it is called not only to proclaim the message but also to actualize it in the midst of all situations, is ministering to its people facing such thorny issues. It is our belief that education should be a liberating process, enabling persons and communities to realize their full human potential as purposed for them by God. We must be prepared, therefore, to take a stand against oppressive educational and social systems, based on our recognition that in the Gospel every culture is fully recognized in Christ's *eschaton*.

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NOH ON CHRISTIAN THEME WELL-RECEIVED

The Kita Noh School performed the Noh *Fukkatsu* (Resurrection) on April 14 at the Suidobashi Noh Gakudo. Not only was the performance something of a tradition shattering event--since it was the first time the Kita School presented a Christian theme in a traditional Noh theater--but also it was superbly performed and warmly received by the audience.

The head of the Kita School, one of the five traditional Noh schools in Japan, is Minoru Kita, who have a powerful performance in the head role of *shite*, portraying Mary Magdalene in the first part and then the resurrected Christ in the final part. Zenmaro Toki, who wrote the lyrics, has done a number of new Noh plays in conjunction with Mr. Kita, including "Paul the Apostle," their first venture on a Christian theme, performed in 1960. Both "Paul" and "Resurrection" were first staged in the Asahi Shimbun Auditorium.

If the brisk sales of the libretto during the intermission following "Resurrection" are any indication, the play may well become the first Noh play on a New Testament theme to become part of the repertoire of a major Noh school. For this, the main credit goes to the long and hard efforts of Mr. Toki and Mr. Kita who, despite the fact that neither are Christian, have captured the depth and reality of the resurrection both in the lucid and moving lyrics and in the superb performances of all the musicians, singers and dancers.

Such efforts are certainly worthy of notice by the church and certainly deserve the support of all who call themselves Christian. For we too, like Peter, have denied Him thrice, and when asked if we love Him are instructed to "feed my sheep." Being exposed to the Gospel in such dramatic terms by those outside the church comes something as a judgment on the faith of those within the church. Efforts should now be made by Christians to see that "Resurrection" is performed at least annually during the Easter season.--Reviewed by George Gish

TOKYO UNION SEMINARY LAUNCHES ASIAN INSTITUTE

After over a year of preparation, Tokyo Union Theological Seminary in Mitaka launched its Asian Institute for Ecumenical Mission on April 18th. The Asian Institute is to carry forward and extend programs that the Seminary has been carrying on in five areas: (1) The study and practice of theology in an Asian context; (2) Regional exchange of personnel, materials, and programs; (3) Lay training; (4) Continuing theological education; (5) Advanced theological study. The Asian Institute will seek to relate these concerns to the Asian context, including a new approach to the languages used for studies. Whereas all instruction at the Seminary has been in Japanese until now--except in foreign language classes--the Asian Institute will make possible the use of other languages.

The Seminary has been directing the work of the Asian Institute through a faculty committee of which Prof. Yoshishige Sakon is chairman, and preparatory seminars for the Institute have been offered this past year by Profs. Yoshinobu Kumazawa and James M. Phillips. Positive interest in the Asian Institute's work has been expressed by the Association of Theological Schools in Southeast Asia (ATSSEA) and by the Northeast Asia Association of Theological Schools. The students and faculty involved in the Institute's work have come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences in Asian countries, and have been exploring together some of the directions Asian mission has been taking.

"We are no longer in an 'age of plantation' of Western-type Christianity around the world," stressed Prof. Kumazawa in explaining the purposes of the Asian Institute. "Rather, we are living in an 'age of participation,' in which we need to find out how God is at work in all kinds of societies."

Anyone interested is welcome to attend TUTS's weekly seminars on Ecumenical Exchange, held every Wednesday from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

EDITOR'S NOTE: AVACO FACES NEW CHALLENGE, which appeared in the April 27 JCAN (#431, p. 4), was a translation of a report written by Mr. Futoshi Ota, head of the Planning and Production Division of AVACO.

The Japan Overseas Christian Medical Cooperative Service (JOCS) held its annual National Assembly on April 29 in Tokyo. The 385 members present discussed present medical service programs in Asia and outlined new programs for 1973-74.

Dr. Noboru Iwamura has been appointed to head the Community Health Advisory Team of the United Mission to Nepal. Dr. Iwamura has become increasingly busy with comprehensive medical care programs for mountain village communities throughout Nepal. This work is being developed in cooperation with "His Majesty's Government" in Nepal as well as with WHO.

(Dr. Iwamura, who has served for 12 years as a public health specialist in Nepal, is currently on a deputation tour of Japan which began April 26 and will end June 6. He is scheduled to speak 150 times at 60 places from Hokkaido to Kyushu. On April 15 he was awarded the Yoshikawa Eiji Bunka-sho (Prize for Cultural Merits). In mid-June he and his wife are to be on NHK-TV for a five-day series of programs aimed at Japanese housewives.)

Dr. Kuniyuki Itoh (surgeon) and his wife, Dr. Sobi Itoh (gynecologist), are back home on furlough now until next January. They are taking refresher courses in their respective specialities at Nagahama Red Cross Hospital. During their absence, Dr. Takeshi Ishida (surgeon) and his wife, Dr. Teruko Ishida (radiotherapist), are taking their places at Okhaldhunga Dispensary in East Nepal.

Miss Tomoe Tawara will finish her fourth year as a nurse at Chapagaon Dispensary in July, when she will go to London for a year to take an advanced course for midwives at the Royal College of Nursing. Her future work is to train indigenous midwives in Nepal.

Dietician Miss Masae Sakurai is concentrating on Nepali language study until next month when she will become a member of the public health team under Dr. Iwamura's guidance.

The JOCS resolved to provide stronger support for these workers in Nepal and to share more with other member bodies of the United Mission to Nepal in terms of finances.

At the request of the Commission on Health and Responsible Parenthood of the Christian Council of Indonesia, the JOCS is ready to send Dr. and Mrs. Kyuya Tamura to Bethesda Hospital in the Minahasa District of North Celebes for three years beginning this month. Dr. Tamura will be the only doctor who can do surgical operations in the area which has 800,000 people.

In case the JOCS is requested to participate in "post-Vietnam" relief and rehabilitation work, it is prepared to serve in the medical field. The National Assembly voted to cooperate with WCC-EACC-NCCJ along these lines.

The National Assembly emphasized the importance of recruiting and training future overseas workers. It was agreed that the Student Section of the Japan Christian Medical Association should be strengthened, and that varieties of medical field work, both domestic and foreign, should be encouraged for younger medical workers.

Although the core of JOCS is the JCMA, the National Assembly felt that JOCS needs wider public support. Consequently the assembly resolved to conduct a special membership campaign in which it hopes to increase, by five times or more, the supporting members for the coming five years.

A MOUTHFUL OF PURE SAXOPHONE

Japanese has undoubtedly become quite a mixed-up language today following the introduction of words from so many other languages in recent times as part of the process of internationalization. From time to time, efforts are made to "purify" the language. The peak in such efforts, which was reached during the last war, will probably never be approached again. Sweeping efforts were made in some circles then to ban the use of the English language. What a mess it would be for TV and radio announcers today if *saxophones* were still called what they were during the war--*Shinchu oshi botan take-bera-tsuki fukinarashi*.

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KYODAN WOMEN FOCUS ON PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

"What course will education in Japan take in the future?" "Will there be some possible actions for mothers to take?" These are some of the major concerns of the Textbook Study Committee of the National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies. The committee has some basic fears about the future course of education in Japan, especially in light of a recent report of the Central Council on Education (*Chuo Kyōiku Shingikai*) released by the Ministry of Education. The committee members (all of whom, except one, are mothers) are afraid that the thrust of the report is to force education in Japan into becoming more selective and discriminatory, and that education of children might inculcate a sense of "helplessness" or "hopelessness" in them as adults.

As such, the committee is interested in fostering a stronger, more persistent and more responsible attitude among mothers concerning the kind of education their children are and will be receiving. When the committee became aware that Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) might be the place to foster this attitude, it began a full-scale study on what the PTA is and what it could be in Japan. The study, now in process, is focussing on the following concerns:

- history of the PTA.
- the PTA's attitude toward strikes against the Teachers' Efficiency Rating System and Achievement Tests.
- the PTA's attitude toward the movement for full entrance on the high school level.
- the PTA's attitude toward the judgment in the Ienaga court case on education.
- the PTA's attitude toward the report of the Central Council on Education.
- financial problems presently existing in PTAs and schools.
- the need for further investigation of human relations which are often discovered at the time of election of officers and committee members.
- the inconsistencies between school education and home education.
- PTA and mass communication.
- pressure of authorities (such as Ministry of Education pressure on local Boards of Education).
- the PTA and its community activities.

When the committee began its study of the history of the PTA in Japan, it was struck first by the level of ignorance on how it was first established. Secondly, it was struck by the extent to which the goals and ideals of the movement have been neglected or disregarded, which seems to be leading the PTA to failure.

PTAs began in 1946 when the CIE (Civil Information and Education Bureau of the Occupation) made the Ministry of Education organize PTAs with two major emphases: guidance in mode of living (*seikatsu shido*) and Adult Education. Within two years, there were PTAs at 90% of the public schools in Japan. However, despite this impressive record, these PTAs never gained the strength or volunteer support that continue to characterize PTAs in the U.S.A.

In order to understand the present difficulties of PTAs, the committee sent out 550 questionnaires to primary and jr. high (public) schools in the 16 districts of the Kyodan. There were 324 responses to the series of questions regarding PTA goals, problems and rural-urban differences.

The responses, all from PTA-related persons, including non-Christians, included many complaints about lack of social consciousness in the PTA--that leaders performed PTA roles perfunctorily, without real understanding of, nor sense of responsibility to, the organization. On the other hand, there were hopeful signs of people who did take the PTA seriously and who firmly believed that women should have stronger interest and concern in social and political issues. Some women are trying to change their PTAs from groups "led by others" to ones "that stand up by themselves."

On the basis of these hopeful signs, the committee has decided to further its study of PTAs. Beyond this, the committee hopes to encourage more responsible directions in the future growth of PTAs in Japan.